



Indian State And The Threat Of Minority Communalism

Dr. Sharad bhatt, Senior Asst. Professor, Dept. of History, P.N.G. Govt. P. G. College, Ramnagar
(Nainital), Uttarakhand

Indian nation state was founded in 1947 on a moral claim that it represents the interest of all inhabitants of India irrespective of their caste, class or religion. Uniting free India around a modern, democratic and secular notion where religion would not be permitted to define identity, Indian state since then decided not to carry memory of partition and not punish any community for it, thus instilling a sense of shared nationhood in the national life with strict abhorrence to communalism or fundamentalism of any tribe or veracity. It is because of this vision of secular democratic India being adhered to respecting minority rights and being tolerant to dissent, diverse faith and practices that unlike Hindu minority in Pakistan, Indian Muslims do not represent the unfinished agenda of partition. In free India, as sorrows of partition have not been institutionalized as a national project in hate, minority have never been treated as bad, rather have been ensured of all rights as citizen.¹ Since independence Indian state by successfully assuring the rights and freedom of the views and belief of minority, have emerged as a chief protector of Muslim minority.

II

This entrenched secular notion of free India has been greatly shaped by the essential wisdom of the Hindu majority who have historically accepted the polyphony of culture and religion. Hindu socio-religious and cultural system being non communal and responsive to the principles of tolerance, inclusiveness, the affirmation of pluralistic identity and having shown a unique ability to allow different cultures and religion to live side by side, retaining their own identity have been proved pivotal in making India a celebration of differences, united by her variety. And politics, despite witnessing fringe growth of fundamentalism (in response to Muslim fundamentalism) has, any way, not succeeded in taking ownership of Hinduism, the religion of majority. Its elasticity, its refusal to be strait jacketed by the lunatic fringe of the right has ensured that an Indian citizen does not have to be outsider because of religion. But, sadly, while Hinduism has been proved contributory in shaping India what it is today – a secular vibrant democracy, the same can not be attributed to Muslim minority which has witnessed a sharp increase in the fundamentalist and communal tendencies within its community in the past three decades. Though no religion can be blamed for breeding extremism or terror but there is something amiss in the religio-cultural system and psyche of Muslims that make them too religious to be secular. Muslims being largely under the influence and sway of orthodox clergy

,found themselves clinging to extremist ideology with exclusivist agenda ,preached and imparted through fabricated interpretation and teaching of Islams by orthodox establishment ,causing their life to be taken over by fundamentalism -Always imagining the enemy whose existence is a necessary condition for the assertion of religious identity and some one is always there to kill and die for it.

Fundamentalism -the hijacking of a faith to promote an exclusionist agenda , often through violent means - creeps in when faith begins to encroach upon a separate conviction .The first symptom of fundamentalism is aggression ,when this aggression is channeled through an organized section of community , becomes communalism .2 Standing in direct opposition to the secular inclusive democracy ,fundamentalism is based on the promise of extreme exclusion , the creation of demonized other. All over the world it has been hyphenated by word Islam ,and the Indian experience of democracy seems to confirming it .In the name of minority welfare and secularism , the aggressive policy of appeasement of Muslims which has been on play since independence under successive governments in complete disregard of the spirit and Indian Law and constitution ,has resulted in the spiraling growth of Muslim fundamentalism unable to be tamed and controlled now .The lunatic mindset and frenzy with which liberal secular establishment have shown , in perpetuity ,concern for minority welfare even to the extent of absurdity of freely interchanging the state with majority community and labelling the later by inference as vile ,vicious ,vindictive ,violent ,fascist responsible for alleged suffering and neglect of Muslim community ,have actually enhanced and emboldened extremist tendencies in the Muslim community .3 As rightly observed by Keren Armstrong- ‘Fundamentalism exist in symbiotic relationship with an aggressive liberalism or secularism and under attack increasingly becomes more bitter ,extreme and excessive.’ 4

Secular mobilization since 1947 has lent strength to the notion that while communalism is bad ,majority communalism pose a much greater threat to the nation than the majority communalism .We are left with only majority communalism as a strong adversary. The “ secular parties” unwillingness to question ,challenge and confront minority communalism has thus created a space for it to grow as its leaders realizes the power vested in it as a political force or vote bank .Almost all parties have contributed to its growth -The Sangh Parivar by posing a threat to the physical existence of Muslim ,the Congress by playing up this threat , the left by being very selective and underplaying minority communalism and the liberal Muslim intelligentsia by harping on the decline of Urdu and safeguarding of Muslim personnel laws and so forth .Though there have been voices of dissent in the Muslim community itself against not only orthodox governments but almost every governments ,they remain largely unheard of or was made pass in to oblivion , silently .As political scientist Imtiaz Ahmed aptly writes- ‘ The political leadership in the country never let the moderate Muslim leadership to grow .History suggests that no such attempts have ever been made in India.’ 5 Orthodox / extremist elements such as Molauna Madani and Imam Bukhari and many other like them who have captive vote bank , have been patronized ,protected and projected as leaders or voice of the Muslim community. By making Indian State hostage to orthodox Muslim establishment , as suggested in the complete failure of implementing Uniform Civil Code even after the 75 years of independence and the continued submission of the successive governments to the diktat of clergy for fear of losing minority votes ,Indian polity have protected and nurtured over indulgence of minority fundamentalism.

In the absence of larger social movement the orthodox leadership hold on the Muslim community has increased .The expansion of political space for the assertion of community has only helped conservative elements .Secular parties ,including the left abet such tendencies by their silences .And failure of successive government to take stern action against those who threatened secularism by propagating hatred of religions other than their own have emboldened Islamic extremist .As a result of all this India is profusely bleeding under rising Islamic terror especially since the start of 1990s .

III

Earlier located to specifically Kashmir, Islamic terror have now taken most of the region -Uttar Pradesh ,Maharashtra ,Rajasthan ,Gujrat ,Assam and so forth – of India under their grasp. Major urban centers of India like Delhi ,Bombay, Lucknow ,Surat ,Srinagar ,Varanasi ,Jaipur ,Bengaluru etc. have Islamic terror attack costing thousands of innocent civilian lives and hefty damage of the property .Escalating danger of Islamic terror could be gauged from the fact that there were more than 54 major strikes in the first decade of the 21th century ,and no sphere of collective or public life have remained unscathed from terror attack .From attack on parliament to attack on train network ,temples ,market centers ,educational institutions ,public festivals and so on, the target of terrorist have widened over the years –

- Dec 6 ,1993 – Serial explosion on Train across the country.
- March 12 ,1993 – Serial Blast rock Mumbai in the worst terror attack ever in the country.
- Dec.22 ,2000 – Terrorist attack army unit inside the Red Fort in Delhi
- Dec.13 , 2001-Terrorist attack on the Parliament of India in New Delhi.
- Sep. 25 ,20002 – Fidyen attack on Akshardham Tempe in Ahmedabad Gujrat.
- July 29 ,2003 -Bombay rip through a blast in Bus at Ghatkopar in Mumbai .
- March,2006 – Attack on the Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi .
- August 2007 -Bombing in Hyderabad .
- Nov. 2007 – Bombing Terminal Court Building in Lucknow ,Varanasi ,Faizabad .May 13,2008 – Serial Blast rock Jaipur .
- July 26 ,2008 – Serial Blast in Ahmedabad .
- Sept. 23 ,2008-Serial blast in Delhi.
- Feb 13 ,2010 -Pune Bombing.

(Source -Newspaper: Times of India -25 sept,2008;23 Sept.2009;& Feb.13 ,2010 ; Magazine : Frontline -29 August ,2008)

Close examination of terrorist attack suggest a common message that terrorist have deadly striking capabilities , cross national support and collaboration and huge local Muslim support as well .To blame for rising Islamic terror entirely on Pakistan or on factors like long years of alienation ,poverty ,socio-economic backwardness ,unemployment ,alleged discrimination of community and so on ,is like shunning away from reality or escaping from it . As several studies suggest that instead of Pakistan based ,a new generation of Indian Jihadis ,who are aged below 35 years ,well educated ,from well off middle class background and well integrated local residents of liberal western democracies ,have been on rise for several years with venomous and divisive political agenda .Being engaged in subversive activities several outfits of home grown Islamic terror -Banned Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) ,Indian Mujahideen ,Indara-e-Fadlullah -ul-Muslimeen ,Harkat -ul-Jihad-e-Islam , Jamate -e -islamic - Hind etc. etc. -are active in the different region of India . Busy in forming sleeper cells and dormant terror modules ,these Islamic terrorist representing highly motivated cadres indoctrinate in the Jihad ideology , have been collaborated ,enjoying fluidity across state lines , pooling resources ,cadres and ideas for waging war against India .In fact upsurge in the Jihadism or Islamic terror is the ultimate consequence of the radicalization process going on unbridled in the community for long , which legitimize terrorism as a tool to affect social change .Fast developing in to the ancestry of a hate and nursery of Islamic terror ,Muslim educational institutions like Madrasas , Seminaries which are busy in imparting radical teaching of Islam to common Muslim ,have been found of great help to this process of radicalization .6

Radical /Jihadi Ideology allow its leader to recruit members by presenting them with a divine mission and using all means of grievances real and imagined ,ranging from riots to conspiracies – to keep minority oppressed to present their task as setting right a wrong .Manifesto of Indian Mujahideen declares in clear word – “ Indian Mujahideen are raising the illustrious banner of Jihad against the Hindus and those who fight and resist , and here we begin with the help and permission of Allah Terminating survivors on this land .” 7 Jihad which has long been a well established part of the spectrum of Muslim political response to political and economic crisis , has found new meaning and interpretation at the hand of political establishment who not only have provided religious justification for Jihad but also have popularized it in mobilizing Muslims against Indian unity and composite culture .Fabricated teaching .interpretation and explanation of Islam by clergy and bestowing upon Muslim the manufactured and false sense of history suggesting conquering foreign land and destroying idolators’ temple was a virtue in itself for Muslim, have motivated substantial section of Muslim on the path of extremism or Jihad .Belief of Jihadi groups in exclusivist philosophy that war against India and non believer is Just and fair and aimed at bringing India under Islamic control , precludes doubts and allow them to identify with the global Pan Islamic movement ; it also derives a deep hatred for innocent victims who are seen as undeserving of compassion .

IV

Meek and weak response of Indian State towards Islamic terror has actually helped it to grow in to macabre monster . Indian state ,for long , by commensurating rising Islamic extremism with the anguish of muslim minority and following policy of pacifying muslim orthodoxy under the guise of protecting minority , have remained not only largely reluctant to recognize the imminent danger of Islamic terror or muslim communalism , but also confused , uncertain and undecided in their response to spiraling terror under the sheer compulsion of electoral politics .The unwillingness of Indian state to face the challenge of minority communalism is now coming to roost . Blood and hatred spilled all over the body of mother India , we are paying the price of underrating the threat of minority communalism .Now it has assumed proportions serious enough to pose a threat not only to government , but also to the very existence of India , as a nation and its civilization values .Unless Indian state decides to deal with it ,with full force and political might intended at its complete termination , the unity and progress of secular India will reel under constant threat of Islamic terror .

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